United Nations S/2010/410

Security Council

Distr.: General
2 August 2010

Original: English

Letter dated 30 July 2010 from the Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

In my capacity as Chair of the Working Group of the Security Council on Children and Armed Conflict, I have the honour to submit a report on the activities of the Working Group since the submission of its last report on 22 July 2009.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and the enclosed report issued as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Claude **Heller**

10-47176 (E) 100810

Please recycle

Annual report on the activities of the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, established pursuant to resolution 1612 (2005) (1 July 2009 to 30 June 2010)

I. Introduction

1. On 26 July 2005, the Security Council adopted resolution 1612 (2005), on children and armed conflict.

2. In paragraph 8 of the resolution, the Council decided to establish a working group of the Security Council to review the reports of the mechanism referred to in paragraph 3 of the resolution, to review progress in the development and implementation of the action plans mentioned in paragraph 7 of the resolution and to consider other relevant information presented to it. The Council decided further that the working group should:

(a) Make recommendations to the Council on possible measures to promote the protection of children affected by armed conflict, including through recommendations on appropriate mandates for peacekeeping missions and recommendations with respect to the parties to the conflict;

(b) Address requests, as appropriate, to other bodies within the United Nations system for action to support implementation of the resolution in accordance with their respective mandates.

3. Pursuant to resolution 1612 (2005), the Chair of the Working Group submitted reports to the Council on developments in relation to the Working Group for the periods from 26 July 2005 to 30 June 2006 (S/2006/497), from 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007 (S/2007/428), from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008 (S/2008/455) and from 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009 (S/2009/378). Since the issuance of the latter report, the Working Group has held five formal meetings, on 1 July, 12 October and 18 December 2009 and on 4 February and 29 April 2010.

II. Substantive issues addressed

21st meeting

4. At its 21st meeting, on 1 July 2009, the Working Group adopted conclusions with respect to the reports of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in Afghanistan (S/2008/695), in the Central African Republic (S/2009/66) and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2008/693). Those conclusions were published as documents S/AC.51/2009/1, S/AC.51/2009/2 and S/AC.51/2009/3, respectively. The Chair of the Working Group then carried out the tasks entrusted to him in the context of the conclusions, including by drawing the attention of the Security Council to the need to follow up on the recommendations addressed to it.

5. The Working Group discussed the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in Myanmar (S/2009/278). The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Radhika Coomaraswamy, introduced the report and recalled its main conclusions:

(a) The United Nations country team had been making efforts to work with the Government of Myanmar and protection partners in addressing some of the most serious concerns regarding the well-being of children affected by armed conflict in Myanmar;

(b) The Government had made significant efforts to address the issue of underage recruitment into military service, including actions to discharge underage children, and training and awareness-raising activities for military personnel on international and national law on the prevention of recruitment of children;

(c) There was a need to facilitate dialogue between the United Nations and the Karen National Union and Karenni National Progressive Party for the purpose of signing an action plan in accordance with Security Council resolutions 1539 (2004) and 1612 (2005).

6. The representative of Myanmar presented the point of view of his Government. The Working Group then held an exchange of views, and, following the discussion, the experts were given the task of negotiating draft conclusions of the Group that would provide concrete follow-up to the Secretary-General's report.

7. The main elements of the statement made by the representative of the State concerned and of the exchange of views among the members of the Working Group are reflected in the summary contained in the conclusions subsequently adopted by the Group at its 22nd meeting (S/AC.51/2009/4).

8. Also at its 21st meeting, the Working Group discussed the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in Sri Lanka (S/2009/325). The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict introduced the report and recalled its main conclusions:

(a) Despite some progress and the release of children by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and a modicum of efforts on the part of the Tamil Makkal Viduthalai Pulikal (TMVP), trends of child recruitment by armed groups continued to be a source of major concern in Sri Lanka;

(b) The provision of humanitarian assistance to affected children in the conflict zones was difficult;

(c) Limited progress had been made with regard to dialogue with armed groups for action plans to stop the recruitment and use of children in violation of applicable international law;

(d) The continuing efforts and engagement of the Government of Sri Lanka were to be commended, and there were tremendous challenges for the protection of children in armed conflict.

9. The representative of Sri Lanka presented the point of view of his Government. The Working Group then held an exchange of views, and, following the discussion, the experts were given the task of negotiating draft conclusions of the Group that would provide concrete follow-up to the Secretary-General's report.

10. The main elements of the statement made by the representative of the State concerned and of the exchange of views among the members of the Working Group are reflected in the summary contained in the conclusions subsequently adopted by the Group at its 25th meeting (S/AC.51/2010/2).

11. The Deputy Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Hilde Frafjord Johnson, then presented the Secretary-General's "horizontal note", placing particular emphasis on the situation of children in Burundi and Iraq:

(a) In Burundi, reintegration assistance had been provided to 340 children who had been separated from the Forces nationales de libération (FNL) between 2 and 10 April 2009 and had been reunited with their families. However, a serious challenge remained in preventing future recruitment in contravention of applicable international law and ensuring the children's full reintegration into their families and communities;

(b) In Iraq, while there had been some general improvements in the security situation during the reporting period, there were continuing reports of attacks causing death and injury to children, including through the use of roadside and suicide bombs.

12. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General reported to the Working Group on her visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

22nd meeting

13. At its 22nd meeting, on 12 October 2009, the Working Group adopted conclusions with respect to the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in Myanmar (S/2009/278). Those conclusions were published as document S/AC.51/2009/4. The Chair of the Working Group then carried out the tasks entrusted to him in the context of those conclusions, including by drawing the attention of the Security Council to the need to follow up on the recommendations addressed to it.

14. The Working Group discussed the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in Colombia (S/2009/434). The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict introduced the report and recalled its main conclusions:

(a) Combating impunity for violations against children was a priority;

(b) Significant efforts and progress had been made by the Government of Colombia in the protection of children.

15. The representative of Colombia presented the point of view of his Government. The Working Group then held an exchange of views, and, following the discussion, the experts were given the task of negotiating draft conclusions of the Group that would provide concrete follow-up to the Secretary-General's report.

16. The main elements of the statement made by the representative of the State concerned and of the exchange of views among the members of the Working Group will be reflected in the summary contained in the conclusions to be formally adopted by the Group at its next meeting.

17. At the same meeting, the Working Group discussed the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in Burundi (S/2009/450). The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict introduced the report and recalled its main conclusions:

(a) All children associated with armed groups in Burundi had been separated and reunited with their families;

(b) Cases of rape and sexual violence, the abduction and detention of children, and child recruitment in contravention of applicable international law by FNL had increased during the period before the release of all children identified as associated with its forces in April 2009;

(c) Despite improvements in security, a climate of impunity for violators of the rights of children persisted in Burundi;

(d) The Government of Burundi was encouraged to consider the protection of children in the application of transitional justice mechanisms and in all provisions of security sector reform, and to facilitate the adoption of an integrated child protection system.

18. The representative of Burundi presented the point of view of his Government. The Working Group then held an exchange of views, and, following the discussion, the experts were given the task of negotiating draft conclusions of the Group that would provide concrete follow-up to the Secretary-General's report.

19. The main elements of the statement made by the representative of the State concerned and of the exchange of views among the members of the Working Group are reflected in the summary contained in the conclusions subsequently adopted by the Group at its 23rd meeting (S/AC.51/2009/6).

20. Also at its 22nd meeting, the Working Group discussed the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in Uganda (S/2009/462). The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict introduced the report and recalled its main conclusions:

(a) The Ugandan People's Defence Forces (UPDF) and its auxiliary forces, the local defence units, had been removed from the annexes to the eighth report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict (A/63/785-S/2009/158). That delisting had followed the signing, in January 2009, of an action plan in line with Security Council resolutions 1539 (2004) and 1612 (2005) between the Government of Uganda and the United Nations country-level task force on monitoring and reporting. In that regard, the report outlined the implementation of the action plan and the follow-up activities with respect to the conclusions and recommendations of the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict with regard to Uganda (S/AC.51/2008/13);

(b) The cooperation with the Government of Uganda had been very effective and had allowed the United Nations and its partners to successfully verify that no more children were present in the ranks of UPDF or its auxiliary forces and that no cases of the recruitment or use of children had been reported since August 2007;

(c) The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) remained very active in the region, despite the fact that no military activity had been reported on Ugandan territory since the signing of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement in August 2006;

(d) The regional dimension of LRA activities was emphasized, and United Nations actors and country-level task forces on monitoring and reporting were increasingly working on regional coordination for information-sharing, data collection and the repatriation of abducted children to their countries of origin.

21. The representative of Uganda presented the point of view of his Government. The Working Group then held an exchange of views, and, following the discussion, the experts were given the task of negotiating draft conclusions of the Group that would provide concrete follow-up to the Secretary-General's report.

22. The main elements of the statement made by the representative of the State concerned and of the exchange of views among the members of the Working Group are reflected in the summary contained in the conclusions subsequently adopted by the Group at its 25th meeting (S/AC.51/2010/1).

23. The Director of the Office of Emergency Programmes of UNICEF, Louis-Georges Arsenault, then presented the Secretary-General's "horizontal note", placing particular emphasis on the situation of children in Sri Lanka, the Central African Republic and the Philippines:

(a) In Sri Lanka, there had been positive developments. Since TMVP had signed its action plan, there had been a significant reduction in the number of reported cases of child recruitment and an increase in the number of releases of children by TMVP;

(b) In the Central African Republic, the Armée pour la Restauration de la République et la Démocratie had committed to releasing all children within its ranks; as a result, between April and July 2009 418 children had been released and had been reunited with their families. However, 183 verified cases of sexual violence against women and children, among more than 1,000 reported, had been perpetrated, mainly by armed groups;

(c) In the Philippines, an action plan had been signed by the Moro Islamic Liberation Front on 30 July 2009.

24. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General reported to the Working Group on her visit to Nepal.

23rd meeting

25. At its 23rd meeting, on 18 December 2009, the Working Group adopted conclusions with respect to the reports of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in Burundi (S/2009/450) and in the Sudan (S/2009/84). Those conclusions were published as documents S/AC.51/2009/6 and S/AC.51/2009/5, respectively. The Chair of the Working Group then carried out the tasks entrusted to him in the context of the conclusions, including by drawing the attention of the Security Council to the need to follow up on the recommendations addressed to it.

24th meeting

26. At its 24th meeting, on 4 February 2010, the Working Group discussed the report on the mission to Sri Lanka undertaken by the Special Envoy of the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, Major General (ret.) Patrick Cammaert. The report had been requested owing to the evolution of the situation on the ground in Sri Lanka and the military operations that had resulted in the defeat of LTTE, with a view to assessing the impact of the armed conflict in Sri Lanka on children and to reviewing remedial measures undertaken. General Cammaert undertook his mission to Sri Lanka from 5 to 11 December 2009.

27. The main elements of the statement made by the representative of the State concerned and of the exchange of views among the members of the Working Group are reflected in the summary contained in the conclusions subsequently adopted by the Group at its 25th meeting (S/AC.51/2010/2).

25th meeting

28. At its 25th meeting, on 29 April 2010, the Working Group adopted conclusions with respect to the reports of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in Uganda (S/2009/462) and in Sri Lanka (S/2009/325). Those conclusions were published as documents S/AC.51/2010/1 and S/AC.51/2010/2, respectively. The Chair of the Working Group then carried out the tasks entrusted to him in the context of the conclusions, including by drawing the attention of the Security Council to the need to follow up on the recommendations addressed to it.

29. The Working Group discussed the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in the Philippines (S/2010/36). The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict introduced the report and recalled its main conclusions:

(a) Significant developments had occurred with respect to the protection of children, involving the parties listed in the report;

(b) The progress made since the first country report had included the development of an action plan with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front;

(c) Recommendations were presented for the protection of children in conflict-affected areas, including the need for resources to be immediately mobilized for the implementation of the monitoring and reporting mechanism initiatives, with special focus on the development and implementation of action plans.

30. The representative of the Philippines presented the point of view of his Government. The Working Group then held an exchange of views, and, following the discussion, the experts were given the task of negotiating draft conclusions of the Group that would provide concrete follow-up to the Secretary-General's report.

31. The main elements of the statement made by the representative of the State concerned and of the exchange of views among the members of the Working Group will be reflected in the summary contained in the conclusions to be formally adopted by the Group at its next meeting.

32. Also at its 25th meeting, the Working Group discussed the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in Nepal (S/2010/183). The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict introduced the report and recalled its main conclusions:

(a) Significant progress had been made in the latter part of 2009 in planning for the discharge and rehabilitation of the 4,008 disqualified Maoist army personnel, including 2,973 verified as minors. On 16 December 2009, an action plan for the discharge and rehabilitation of the disqualified Maoist army personnel verified as minors had been signed by representatives of the Government of Nepal and the Unified Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist and by the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator and the representative of UNICEF in Nepal, on behalf of the United

Nations. The discharge had subsequently begun on 7 January and had ended on 8 February 2010;

(b) Strikes (referred to as "bandhs") and protests by various groups had continued across the country, often severely disrupting daily life. They had resulted in the frequent closure of schools, which had had a negative impact on children's right to education, particularly in the Tarai region.

33. The representative of Nepal presented the point of view of his Government. The Working Group then held an exchange of views, and, following the discussion, the experts were given the task of negotiating draft conclusions of the Group that would provide concrete follow-up to the Secretary-General's report.

34. The main elements of the statement made by the representative of the State concerned and of the exchange of views among the members of the Working Group will be reflected in the summary contained in the conclusions to be formally adopted by the Group at its next meeting.

35. The Deputy Executive Director of UNICEF then presented the Secretary-General's "horizontal note", placing particular emphasis on the situation of children in Colombia and a number of concerns linked to activities of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA):

(a) In Colombia, the recruitment and use of children by armed groups had continued, placing indigenous children in particular at risk. That situation had been identified as a main cause of the internal displacement of families. Furthermore, schools had continued to be used by the Colombian armed forces and were not being respected as zones of peace;

(b) LRA was perpetrating abuses against children in Southern Sudan, the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. That situation demanded a subregional response.

36. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General reported to the Working Group on her visit to Afghanistan.